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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY  
OFFICE OF CURRENT INTELLIGENCE  
6 October 1961

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## CURRENT INTELLIGENCE MEMORANDUM

SUBJECT: Jordanian Parliamentary Elections on 19  
October

1. Offices to be filled: All 60 seats in the House of Representatives, the lower house in Jordan's parliament. The seats are equally distributed between East Jordan and the Palestinian West Bank and are allocated on the basis of religion. Three of the 48 Moslem seats are assigned to Bedouins. There are 10 Christian seats and two for Circassians.

2. Parties participating: Political parties were outlawed in 1957; hence their overt participation in the election is prohibited. Leaders of major parties formerly prominent in Jordanian politics--the National Socialist, Arab Socialist Resurrection (Baath), and Arab Nationalist (Qawmiyin al-Arab) parties--nevertheless formed a loose "nationalist front" for the purpose of discreetly coordinating support for certain candidates. When the extent of the government's control of election procedures subsequently became evident, the front decided to boycott the elections.

3. Outstanding personalities: In accordance with an announcement by King Husayn that "only the qualified and better persons should compete," the Ministry of Interior has exercised close control over candidacies. Leading members of the outlawed political parties and other persons regarded as security risks have been prohibited or discouraged from running, while the government has, in many cases, urged and even forced civil servants and others to become candidates. Since most of the regime's principal supporters are already in the cabinet (which is not dependent on parliamentary approval),

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the royal court, or the upper house (Senate), few outstanding personalities are participating in the election. Wasfi Mirza, who resigned as minister of defense in early September, is the only man of cabinet rank who is running. Former cabinet minister Hikmat al-Masri, a leader of the National Socialist party, was among those warned not to seek office.

4. Principal issues: There are no national issues of the sort normally debated during an election campaign. The candidates, most of whom are unopposed, obviously will adhere to the government's line on national policies in addition to promising to solve the particular local problems of their respective constituencies. For this reason and because of the distraction of recent developments in Syria, the campaign has tended to be one of the quietest and most apathetic on record. The very blatancy of the government's interference, however, has become an issue among opposition elements excluded from the campaign.

5. Principal factors influencing outcome: All prospective candidates were required to obtain "good conduct" certificates from Public Security authorities, and the director of Public Security was under orders to give certificates only to those candidates on a government-approved list--in effect eliminating anyone suspected of opposing the regime.

6. Background: The previous parliamentary elections in 1956--were almost entirely free from interference by the government, but nothing was done to prevent interference by foreign agents. The resulting parliament was dominated by pro-Nasir elements, and their subsequent political maneuvering led in 1957 to an attempted coup against Husayn which nearly succeeded, whereupon all political parties were proscribed. The government's controls in the present election are designed to avoid a repetition of that crisis.

Elections were to have been held in October 1960, but the assassination of Prime Minister Majalli two months earlier persuaded Husayn to postpone them for a year.

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7. Informed opinion on outcome: The return of a lower house subservient to the regime's wishes is a foregone conclusion. Nearly two thirds of the candidates have already been declared elected because they were "uncontested."

8. Significance for US security interests: The fraudulence of the elections probably will further undermine the stability of Husayn's regime with consequent danger to Jordanian integrity, which we regard as important for our interests in the Middle East. Repugnance toward Jordan's government may well increase and spread among the people, creating conditions more favorable for subversion.

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